

The World of  
**Ryan T.  
Higgins!**



EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

Disney • HYPERION BOOKS



## About the Author

**Ryan T. Higgins** ([www.ryanhiggins.com](http://www.ryanhiggins.com)) is an author and illustrator who likes the outdoors and cheese sandwiches. He is NOT a grumpy old black bear, but he DOES like making books about one—starting with the best-selling *Mother Bruce*, which received the E. B. White Read-Aloud Award and the Ezra Jack Keats New Illustrator Honor. He lives in Maine with his wife and kids . . . and too many pets.

## Praise for Ryan T. Higgins

- #1 *New York Times* Best Seller
- Kids Indie Next List, Top Ten
- E. B. White Read-Aloud Award
- Ezra Jack Keats New Illustrator Honor
- "Hats off to Ryan T. Higgins."  
—*The Wall Street Journal*
- "Higgins turns classic picture-book scenarios upside down, then wings them for contemporary laughs."  
—*The New York Times*
- ★ "Visually beautiful, clever, edgy, and very funny."  
—*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)
- ★ "VERDICT This hilarious and fun read-aloud will be a hit at storytime. Kids will be laughing out loud."  
—*School Library Journal* (starred review)
- ★ "Higgins breathes emotional life into his characters, both visually and verbally, and his smart, laugh-out-loud comedy is expertly paced."  
—*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)



# About the Books

## Mother Bruce

Bruce is a bear who does not like many things except being alone and making egg recipes. In a surprising turn of events, Bruce's eggs hatch into four goslings. Not only do the goslings ruin Bruce's dinner, but they immediately think that he is their mother. What will Bruce do with the goslings? Will they be his companions forever? Or will he figure out a way to get rid of them?

## Hotel Bruce

When Bruce and the geese return from their migration trip, they find several uninvited guests living in their den. Three very persistent mice decide to turn his den into a busy hotel. Bruce is tired, grumpy, and not very happy to have new guests. Will Bruce's home remain a hotel? Will he ever have peace and quiet again? What will Bruce do with all of his guests?

## Be Quiet!

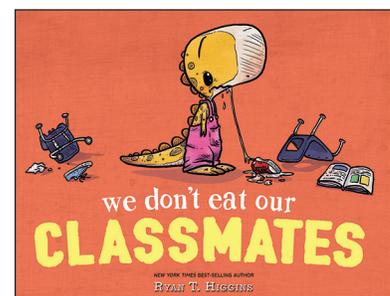
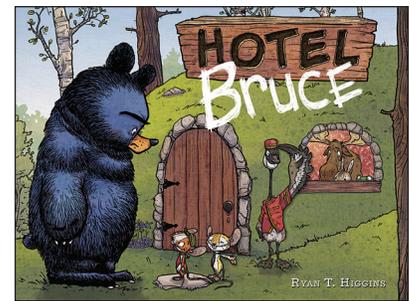
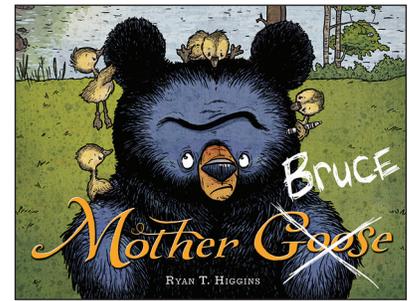
Rupert the mouse is very excited to be the star character in a wordless picture book. Just as Rupert attempts to create a beautiful scenic picture book, his friends begin offering their ideas. Follow the very funny adventure as Rupert tries to stop everyone from talking. Will Rupert succeed in writing a wordless picture book? Will he use any of the ideas offered by his friends?

## Bruce's Big Move

Bruce has finally had enough of living in chaos with four messy geese and three rowdy mice. He decides to move away with the geese to a new home without rodents. Of course his plan does not quite work out, which makes for a very exciting and funny sequence of events for the reader. Will Bruce escape the mice?

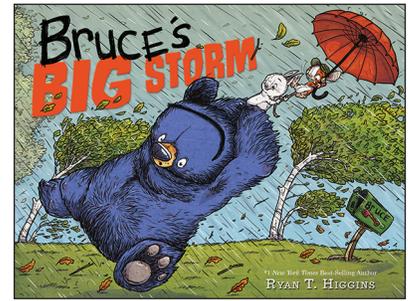
## We Don't Eat Our Classmates

Penelope Rex is very nervous about her first day of school. When she walks into the building she is surprised to learn that her classmates are delicious children. Penelope tries her best to make a good impression, but finds herself in very tricky situations. Readers will enjoy following Penelope on her challenging and delectable new journey.



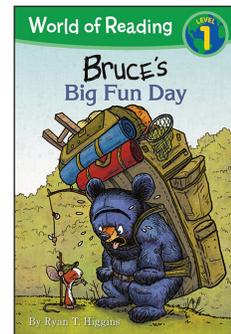
## Bruce's Big Storm

Although Bruce just wants to be left alone, his home is already a full house. And when a big storm brings all his woodland neighbors knocking, he'll have to open his door to a crowd of animals in need of shelter—whether he likes it or not. How will Bruce respond to all of his guests? What adventures will the storm bring inside and outside of Bruce's home?



## World of Reading: Bruce's Big Fun Day

Nibbs is determined to share a BIG FUN DAY with Bruce. But Bruce does not like BIG FUN DAYS. Will Nibbs succeed, or will Bruce go to bed grumpy? Readers will love the way the chapters and illustrations capture the funny exchanges between Nibbs and Bruce. The Level 1 reader is also a great way to help young readers explore books independently by reading on their own. The decodable words, sight words, and chapter format will support the development of foundational literacy skills.



## Common Core Alignment

These Bruce books allow readers to enter a hilarious world through the very funny adventures of Bruce, the goslings, and their mice companions. The books provide a great opportunity to practice literacy skills, such as phonological awareness, sequencing, prediction, and character traits based on the vocabulary, vivid descriptions, and events. This discussion guide provides suggestions aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for Reading: Literature, Writing, Foundational Skills, and Speaking and Listening. Each activity in this guide includes a reference for the CCSS strand, domain, and standard that is addressed. To support instruction or obtain additional information, visit the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) website [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org).

**Instructional note:** During each of the activities, please encourage students to support their claims with evidence from the text and illustrations. Giving young learners the opportunity to answer text-dependent questions is critical to success with Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

# Pre-Reading Questions

Use the questions below to activate students' background knowledge before they read the stories.

- 1 Are there times that you feel grumpy? What makes you feel that way? What types of things make you feel better? Do you have any *companions*? What makes your *companions* fun to be around? (*Mother Bruce*)
- 2 When do you like to have a lot of company? When do you like to be alone? Why? Have you ever been to a hotel? What makes a hotel different from a home? (*Hotel Bruce*)
- 3 When do you think it is important for people to be quiet? Why? Are there times that you like silence? Are there times that you like a lot of noise? Why? (*Be Quiet!*)
- 4 Have you ever moved? What was the best part of moving? Why? What is the difference between taking a vacation and moving? What is your favorite part of your home? Why? (*Bruce's Big Move*)
- 5 Have you ever been nervous about starting something new? When? Why? What happened once you began? Was there anything about the experience that you found surprising? (*We Don't Eat Our Classmates*)
- 6 Have you ever seen a big storm? What happened (e.g., thunder, lightning, heavy rain)? Why can big storms be dangerous? How can people stay safe in a big storm? Explain. (*Bruce's Big Storm*)
- 7 What activities do you like to do for fun? Why? Describe your Big Fun Day. What is an activity that you don't enjoy doing? Why? Can you think of an activity that you enjoy but someone else does not? Explain. (*Bruce's Big Fun Day*)



# Classroom Extension Activities

## Snap It, Clap It, or Tap It

To strengthen students' phonemic awareness, select key words from the text and ask students to snap, clap, or tap the number of sounds or syllables. This activity is perfect for reaching students of varying ability. For example, students can tap the sounds in "Big" or clap the syllables in the word "Mother."  
(*Reading: Foundational Skills: Phonological Awareness: RF.K.2, RF.1.2*)

## Exploring Letters, Patterns, and Words

Many young readers are working toward mastery in the area of phonics acquisition. To encourage students to demonstrate understanding of specific decoding skills, allow them to search the text for target letters, patterns, and/or words. Specifically, students may search through the text for *sight words*, *phonics patterns*, *capital letters*, and *lowercase letters*. Once students successfully locate the target phonics patterns, letters, or words, they should read them aloud. (*Reading: Foundational Skills: Print Concepts: RF.K.1, RF.1.1*)

## Picture Perfect

The books in the series have many rich connections between the illustrations and text. To support comprehension skills, ask students to explain the role of an author (writes the story) and illustrator (draws the pictures). Once they respond, engage learners in a "picture walk" by asking them to identify their favorite illustration. Lastly, readers should explain what is happening in the illustration and how it relates to the actual words and events in the story. (*Reading Literature: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: RL.K.7, RL.1.7*)

## Fiction vs. Nonfiction

Read an informational text about a real bear and a story in the Bruce series. Discuss the differences between an informational text about bears and a narrative story about Bruce. Ask children to answer the following questions using textual evidence:

- 1 What are the differences between a real bear and Bruce? (e.g., clothes, food, home)
- 2 Are there any similarities between a real bear and Bruce? (e.g., hibernation)
- 3 How are the images different between the informational and fictional text? (e.g., illustrations vs. real photos)
- 4 What did you learn about bears in the informational book?
- 5 Which book did you enjoy reading more? Why? (*Reading Literature: Craft and Structure: RL.K.5, RL.1.5*)

## Super Speech Bubbles

Before reading the series, describe the important function that a speech bubble serves. A speech bubble shows the actual words a character says or what the character is thinking. It is also important to note that speech bubbles are usually found in fictional storybooks. As students read, ask the following questions: *What does this speech bubble tell us about the character? How does this speech bubble make the story more interesting or funny? What new details do readers learn from the speech bubbles?* Use the organizer below to help students explore specific scenes and speech bubbles. (*Reading Literature: Craft and Structure: RL.K.5, RL.1.5*)

## Favorite Scene with a Speech Bubble

Draw an important scene from the book and include a speech bubble for your favorite character.

Character Name:



## Say It with Expression

The book *Be Quiet!* presents a great opportunity for readers to explore punctuation and develop reading fluency. Follow the protocol below to practice foundational reading fluency skills. (*Reading: Foundational Skills: Fluency: RF.K.4, RF.1.4*)

- Prior to reading, explain to students the three components of reading fluency: accuracy, prosody, and speed/rate. Provide students with an appropriate model of each fluency component by reading sentences with different types of punctuation (i.e., question mark, period, exclamation point).
- As you read the story, emphasize the punctuation included on each page, such as a question mark, period, or exclamation point. For struggling students it may be helpful to highlight or underline the punctuation marks. For advanced learners you can also explain that anything written in all capital letters indicates additional emphasis.
- Then allow students to read sentences from the book together as a group, with partners, and individually. Again, the level of support they will need will vary based on reader ability. Be sure to have students engage in repeated reading of the sentences.
- Ask students how reading the sentences more than one time improved aspects of their fluency (i.e., accuracy, prosody, speed/rate).

## Buddy Reading for Success

Buddy reading is a great opportunity to integrate comprehension, foundational skills, and speaking and listening standards. Follow the steps below to help students make literacy connections with a partner. (*Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: SL.K.1, SL.1.1; Writing: Text Types and Purposes: W.K.1, W.1.1*)

- Read the book aloud to all participating students.
- Assign partner pairs; label one student A and the other student B.
- Ask students to take alternating turns using one of the strategies listed below:

**Reading:** If students are able to decode the words, they should take turns reading the pages to each other. Explicitly tell students that Partner A should go first and Partner B should go second. When the student who is reading pronounces a word incorrectly or skips a word, the partner should correct him or her by saying “stop, try that word again” at the end of the sentence.

**Retelling:** If students are unable to decode the words on their own, they should look at the illustrations to describe the events and important details to their partner. Explicitly tell students that Partner A should go first and Partner B should go second.



- When the book is finished, encourage students to discuss what happened by using the sentence stems a-e below.

a. I think \_\_\_\_\_ is important because \_\_\_\_\_.

b. I want to know more about \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.

c. My favorite part was when \_\_\_\_\_.

d. I didn't like when \_\_\_\_\_.

e. I felt \_\_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_\_.

- Finally, ask students to complete the "Read About It, Write About It" graphic organizer on the next page. The organizer will support students as they describe the sequence of events and their favorite parts of the story.



## Read About It, Write About It Graphic Organizer

	First	Next	Then	Last
Picture				
Writing				

My Favorite Part Was:

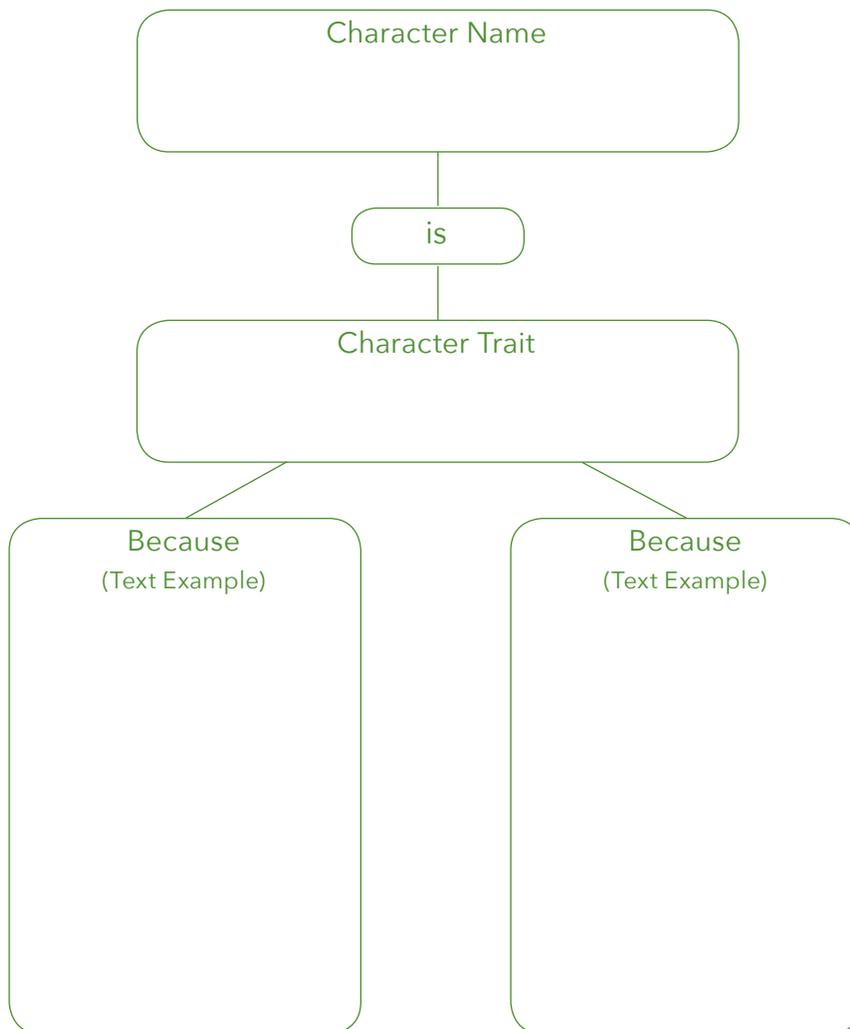
## Name That Character Trait

As students read the text, ask them about the traits associated with each character. Readers may require extra support to identify character traits and make connections to specific actions in the story. Provide students with assistance by using the *Character Traits List* and the *Character Traits Graphic Organizer* below. (*Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.K.3, RL.1.3*)

## Character Traits List

Happy	Mean	Curious	Clever	Rude
Sad	Bossy	Wise	Funny	Sneaky
Kind	Brave	Loyal	Loud	Confused
Angry	Lazy	Silly	Smart	Quiet
Friendly	Unhappy	Rowdy	Grumpy	Persistent
Playful	Hesitant	Fearful	Uncooperative	Considerate
Confident	Cooperative	Sincere	Determined	Optimist

## Character Traits Graphic Organizer



## Unpack Vocabulary with Pictures

Create word and picture cards to help students access challenging vocabulary words in the book. Be sure to discuss the words in context as you read the book aloud and hang the visuals for students to reference. (*Reading Literature: Craft and Structure: RL.K.4, RL.1.4*)

### Vocabulary Cards

Word	Picture

Once students are presented with the vocabulary cards, allow them to “act out” the word, explain another word that is “similar” (synonyms), and/or explain words that are the “opposite” (antonyms) to ensure they are able to make connections to the new vocabulary.



## Add a Little Drama

Select a topic highlighted in one of the books and create a dramatic play center for students to imagine, create, and explore new concepts. The center should provide students with the access to the related book, props, costumes (*if appropriate*), and materials for writing. *Note: Be sure to label the items in the center to support access to environmental print.* Some ideas for centers inspired by the books are outlined below. (*Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: SL.K.1, SL.1.1*)

- **Supermarket (*Mother Bruce*)**  
Students can use grocery bags, a register, and food items to pretend they are shopping. Also, leave students with receipt paper to encourage writing about the names and prices of grocery items.
- **Hotel (*Hotel Bruce*)**  
Provide materials such as bellhop hats, luggage to move, and a check-in desk/lobby. Students can also use blank index cards to create hotel keys with numbers and directions.
- **Collaborate to Make a Book (*Be Quiet!*)**  
Give students access to items such as blank booklets, magazine cutouts, props such as vegetables, and pictures of different characters to both write and act out a new story.
- **Packing and Moving (*Bruce's Big Move*)**  
Include items that are commonly associated with moving such as boxes to pack, clothes, plastic appliances, and mini moving trucks. Ask students to write labels on boxes or to create a list of items to pack on blank paper.
- **Classroom Teacher and Students (*We Don't Eat Our Classmates*)**  
Include items that are commonly found in a classroom such as whiteboards, paper, markers, pencils, carpet mats, and school supplies. Encourage students to take turns playing the role of the teacher and students.
- **Storm Center (*Bruce's Big Storm*)**  
In a large sensory bin, provide items that are associated with a heavy storm, such as gray cotton balls to represent storm clouds, blue rice to represent the sky, funnels and sifters to make rain, items that can be moved by wind (e.g., chimes, student-made pinwheels), items that cannot be moved by wind (e.g., heavy rocks), and storm bottles (blue water and blue glitter). Also, play a storm sounds audio to immerse students in the experience while they talk about the weather.

## Add a Little Drama

It is important for students to retell the events in the story by using multiple modalities. Ask students to reenact the events in one of the books by creating a play. To engage learners, you should assign roles, allow students to plan/discuss their actions, and then have them act out the scenes with props. Guide students by prompting responses and assisting with transitions between different scenes in the story. While students are acting out the events, remind them to *show and NOT tell* the key parts. (*Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.K.2, RL.1.2*)

## Cause and Effect

As the participants read the story, ask them to consider the cause and effect of the characters' actions. Explain that the cause is "why something happened" and the effect is "what happened." This concept is particularly funny to discuss in the story "We Don't Eat Our Classmates." (*Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.K.3, RL.1.3*)

## Problem-Solution Organizer

<b>Cause</b> Why Something Happened	<b>Effect</b> What Happened
Draw the Cause	Draw the Effect
<p>Write about the Cause and Effect</p> <p>When the character _____</p> <p>The effect was _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	

## I Can Connect the Texts

Children often benefit from an author study, which is when they read several books by the same author. As you read the books, explain to students that they were created by the same author. Ask students: What are some similarities and differences between the stories? Which characters are the same? Which characters are different? How do the characters or events change in the stories? (*Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.K.1, RL.1.1*)

Use the graphic organizer below to help students compare one character who is featured in two books. Students can work together to decide which experience to highlight, illustrate, and describe in a sentence.

I Can Compare Two Books
Book 1: _____
Book 2: _____
Character Name:
Illustrate an Experience for Your Selected Character that was Similar in Two Different Books
Write a Sentence About Your Picture _____ _____

## Science Exploration

Organize students in groups of three to four for a supported research and inquiry project inspired by the Bruce books. Give students the opportunity to use text and online resources to explore the topics of Habitat, Migration, or Hibernation. Some guiding questions are: What are the habitats of geese, bears, and mice? Where do animals typically migrate? Why is migration important? What is hibernation? When do bears hibernate? Why do bears hibernate? Instruct each group to create a poster with images and sentences related to its topic. Give each group two to five minutes to share its poster with the class. After the group explains its key points, the class should pose questions about the topic. Its questions are aligned with discourse emphasized in the Speaking and Listening Standards. (*Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration*: SL.K.1, SL.1.1; *Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge*: W.K.7, W.1.7)

After reading *We Don't Eat Our Classmates*, ask each student to research any *meat-eating* or *plant-eating* dinosaur. Provide participants with a variety of dinosaur books and websites to guide their exploration. Some guiding questions are: What did the dinosaur eat? How did the dinosaur travel? What special traits and/or features did the dinosaur possess? Once students have completed the research, they should do the following:

- 1 Use clay and related art supplies to construct a replica of the dinosaur,
- 2 Write a brief summary about the dinosaur.

After the art and summaries are complete, participants can engage in a “gallery walk” to view, read, and discuss peer work. (*Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge*: W.K.7, W.1.7; *Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas*: SL.K.5, SL.1.5)

Give children a science journal to describe the weather daily and make predictions. Students can record their observations through pictures, words, and/or sentences. Discuss student observations weekly to identify weather changes and bolster related vocabulary (e.g., precipitation, sunny, cloudy, partly cloudy). During the journal discussion, consider asking: Which day was the coolest? Which day was the hottest? How many days had precipitation? How many of your predictions were correct?

Then, to build upon the story *Bruce's Big Storm*, take a nature walk and carefully examine the outdoor environment following a heavy rainstorm. Ask students, What do you notice about the environment (e.g., fallen branches, scattered leaves, puddles)? Throughout the week, revisit the same areas and puddles to discuss how the brush clears and water evaporates. During the nature walks, engage students in opportunities to pose meaningful questions to one another. (*Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing*: W.K.5 W.1.5)

## A Cooking Home Connection

In *Mother Bruce* the reader learns that Bruce loves eggs. With the support of a parent, ask children to research and make an egg recipe at home. While cooking with their children, parents should emphasize the steps of the recipe, counting/measuring ingredients, and reading directions aloud. Lastly, children should come to class prepared to discuss the sequence of steps in their recipe and how much they enjoyed the food. (*Speaking and Listening: Research to Build and Present Knowledge: SL.K.8, SL.1.8*)

In *We Don't Eat Our Classmates*, the reader learns that Penelope loves to eat children. Help children connect with the character by asking them to describe their favorite home-cooked *irresistible* meal. Then, with the support of a parent, children can prepare and write the steps of their favorite home recipe. During the cooking process, parents should emphasize the steps of the recipe, counting/measuring ingredients, and reading directions aloud. Following the activity, children should discuss the sequence of steps in the recipe and what they like most about the food. *Note: Sharing the actual food can be lots of fun as well; just be sure to inquire about student allergies.* (*Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge: W.K.8, W.1.8*)

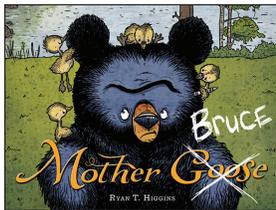


About the author of the Guide: **Dawn Jacobs Martin, PhD**, has spent her career supporting students with disabilities through her roles as a practitioner, researcher, and, currently, the director of special education teacher preparation at the University of Maryland, College Park. She works to improve the academic outcomes for students with disabilities through teacher development, instructional design, and research in the areas of response to intervention, social support, and parent involvement.

Feel free to contact her with questions at [jacobsdm1@gmail.com](mailto:jacobsdm1@gmail.com).

Many more guides can be found on the Disney • Hyperion website at [www.disneybooks.com](http://www.disneybooks.com).

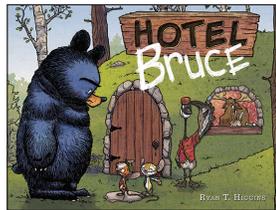
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978-1-4847-3088-1

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**Hotel Bruce**

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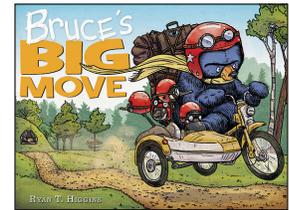
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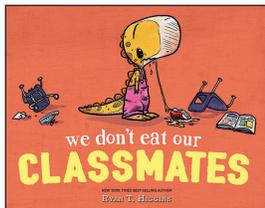
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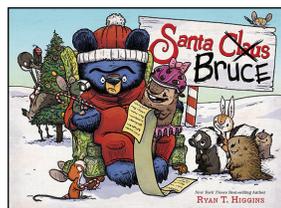
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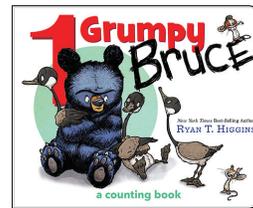
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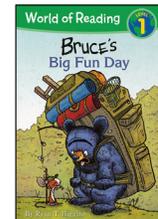
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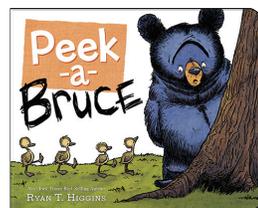
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